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SUBJECT: The Late Nuristan Governor's Unfinished Agenda

(A) KABUL 2348, (B) KABUL 1828

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SUMMARY  
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1. Nuristan Governor Hazrat Din was killed in a car accident on September 5, only two months after he assumed office (see reftel A). Days before his death, Hazrat Din told the PRT's Integrated Command Group (PICG) that security in the eastern districts of Nuristan was his chief concern. He wanted to combine provincial government authority with local traditional institutions (shuras) to improve security (see reftel B). Hazrat Din was frustrated during the past month over the GIROA's Independent Directorate of Local Governance's (IDLG) lack of political and financial support for his efforts. He told the PICG that on September 3, he would ask the IDLG to replace Deputy Governor Haji Haleem and two district administrators. Haleem is currently the acting governor in the interim until a new governor is announced.

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Security in Eastern Nuristan  
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2. Over the past month, Hazrat Din stressed during several meetings with the PICG that provincial security was his chief priority for Nuristan. Hazrat Din was particularly concerned about the eastern districts of Kamdesh, Waygal, and Bargi Matal. The governor made some limited progress on his vision for local governance (reftel A) by establishing a Waygal shura and continuing support for the Kamdesh one-hundred man security shura, but told the PICG that he was unable to attract sufficient financial support from IDLG for the existing bodies or for the creation of additional district shuras. The governor asserted that IDLG's slow response to the provincial government's request for assistance in Nuristan calls into question IDLG's commitment to making the province a priority despite the deteriorating security situation in the East.

3. On August 23 during a meeting with N2KL Brigade Commander, Colonel Spiszer, the late governor requested additional support from Coalition Forces (CF) in Bargi Matal. COL Spiszer agreed to continue providing ammunition and supplies through the winter to Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) who reportedly have been successful at fighting back insurgents attempting to cross into Bargi Matal from Pakistan and Kamdesh. The governor explained that despite the successes, access to Bargi Matal through Kamdesh is still very difficult, with the road blocked by insurgents. (NOTE: CF delivered ammunition and additional supplies as recently as

September 6.)

¶4. Hazrat Din described the security situation in Waygal as improved, noting that the district shura had made progress but that development was badly needed. However, he said that Coalition forces remain unwelcome in the province. The governor highlighted the U.S. military's July 4 airstrike targeting insurgents in response to a mortar attack on a U.S. military base as a turning point in Waygal, citing civilian casualties as the catalyst for anti-CF sentiment in the district. The governor had committed himself to working further with the Waygal shura but insisted that immediate IDLG support was critical. While the late governor described the situation as improved -- there were no anti-CF attacks in Waygal since CF are not present - there have been attacks originating in Waygal that run contrary to security promises made by the district shura.

¶5. According to Hazrat Din, Kamdesh was the most challenging security problem, according to Hazrat Din. He cited a secure Kamdesh as vital to solving security problems in the rest of the province, noting that security in Waygal is directly affected by insurgents coming from Pakistan through Kamdesh. The governor had planned to continue work with the one-hundred man security shura, but stressed that without more IDLG (or CF) support the shura's progress will continue to be minimal. Acting Governor Haji Haleem worked extensively with the Kamdesh security shura but was largely ineffective. His intervention is unlikely to bring additional results.

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Changes in the Provincial Government

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¶6. Governor Hazrat Din stressed to the PICG several times during the past two months that the Deputy Governor was undermining his authority and quietly supporting the return of former Governor Tamim, and that Haleem was responsible for increasing ethnic tensions in the region by expelling fifty-seven Pashtun police from Parun. Hazrat Din told the PRT on September 1 that on September 3 he planned to ask IDLG Director Popal to replace Haleem. Hazrat Din said he was considering Jamal Hudi, an MFA official originally from Bargi Matal for the job. Haleem, a member of the dominant Nuristani Kata tribe, is well connected both in Afghanistan and Pakistan as a former Hizb-I Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) commander. Traditionally, the Kata have held the key leadership positions in Nuristan. Hazrat Din, a member of the minority Wamai tribe, was likely to appoint another Kata official in order to avoid potential feelings of disenfranchisement from that community.

¶7. Hazrat Din informed the PICG that he would ask Popal to also replace the district governors for Waygal (Zia Rahman) and Kamdesh (Anayatullah), both of whom he judged as completely ineffective and incapable of working with local shuras. During the PRT's September 1-2 visit to Parun, several members of the governor's staff indicated that they were considering resigning. They cited the governor's conservatism as the key reason, noting that he insisted on directing the religious practices of his staff. Separately, the governor told the PCG that he intended to replace several members of the staff due to a lack of competence. The late governor's staff was hired by former Governor Tamim, and many are closely allied with the Deputy Governor. Hazrat Din's death may mean that the staff will stay on to assist Haleem during his time as acting governor.

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Comment

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¶8. Hazrat Din was committed to his position and the people of Nuristan. In addition to a keen understanding of the complex reality of Nuristani security and politics, a new governor will need to accomplish two key tasks in order to succeed: (1) effectively lobby the IDLG for resources and (2) carefully balance provincial government authority with traditional local institutions. Hazrat Din's vision for district shuras may not survive the succession, but

a new governor will need to address the key issues that led Hazrat Din to adopt that model.

19. The PICG met with Hazrat Din six times between August 22 and September 3. This cable provides the key elements drawn from those conversations, as well as from meetings with other local government officials.

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